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Cotton Young Achiever and Researcher of the Year Announced

The 2021 winners of the prestigious Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year Award and the ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year have been announced at the Crop Consultants Australia dinner in Narrabri.

Taking the honours are Dr Iain Wilson, a research scientist with the CSIRO in Canberra and Emma Ayliffe, an agronomist based near Griffith.

Dr Wilson was awarded for his efforts in innovation, his professional commitment to the industry and the impact he has had and continues to have on the cotton sector.

The judging panel noted "... Ian's pivotal role in the advancement of germplasm with enhanced Verticillium Wilt resistance through the development of molecular tools employed by the CSIRO cotton breeding program. "

"This germplasm will dramatically improve productivity in regions affected by the Verticillium Wilt pathogen, as well as maintain the sustainability of other cotton production regions ..."

During the judging process Dr Wilson said his focus on developing resistance markers for Black Root Rot, Fusarium Wilt and Cotton Bunchy Top has been driven by his desire to improve economic and environmental benefits to the industry. "It's been a team effort, working to solve interesting but important problems and there's nothing better in science."

The ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year winner Emma Ayliffe is an experienced cotton agronomist who recently started her own consulting business Summit Ag Services.

Emma has been actively involved in the southern expansion of the cotton industry with a focus on efficiencies and sustainability, backed by on farm research and development. Emma is involved in grassroots projects in compaction and irrigation and manages CRDC projects for whitefly.

Information is provided to research organisations to assist development in new products and technologies, which includes the southern development work for Xtend Flex.

Emma has also been highly involved in the Irrigation Research Extension Committee volunteering her time as an advisor and helping to design and manage trials, as well as sourcing in-kind operational support.

Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay said both award winners were outstanding contributors to the cotton industry in different ways and with significant potential to improve the industry over many years.

"Iain's work will have a real and measurable impact on farmers through his work on disease resistance which will in-turn improve yields and reduce the use of chemicals so that's a win for the economy and the environment.



“Emma is showing how fresh ideas and hard work can benefit all the growers in her region and other regions. I am particularly impressed with Emma’s commitment to improving the social licence of cotton and that will have benefits for the country as more people hear how our cotton is among the world’s best in quality and sustainability.”

Cotton Australia is the peak representative body for Australia’s cotton growing industry.

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